Regulatory Authority for Higher Education

*256. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
.SHRIMATI SHQBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether, seeking reforms in the present education system, the National Knowledge Commission has urged Prime Minister to initiate a move to establish an independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education;

(b) if so, whether in a letter to the Prime Minister, NKC Chairman has pointed out that the present regulatory system in higher education is flawed in some important respect's and the barriers to entry are too high; and

(c) if so, the steps being considered by the Prime Minister in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Report of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) on Higher Education was sent by the Planning Commission to the Ministries concerned.

Vacancies of OBC category

*257. SHRI ABU ASIMAZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 27 per cent quota earmarked for filling up vacancies of OBC category has never been filled in the All India Civil Services examination in the twelve years since it was implemented;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and if not, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the shortfall has been steadily growing; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to fill up the entire quota of 27 per cent earmarked for them by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCESAND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) There is a ban on de-reservation of vacancies to be filled by direct recruitment. Further, OBC candidates get relaxation in upper age limit, number of attempts and in qualifying standards.

Four-Laning of NH-17 in **Goa**

*258. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work on the four-laning of National Highway 17 from Patradevi in North Goa to Polen in South Goa has commenced;

(b) if not, the stage at which the project lies; and

(c) the reasons for the delay in implementing the project?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The entire stretch of NH-17 from Patradevi on Maharashtra/Goa border to Polem on Goa/Karnataka border in the state of Goa has been identified by the Government for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for improvement under the National Highways Development Project (NHDP) Phase NIB on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis. The bids received for preparation of DPR have been taken up for evaluation by the National Highways Authority of India.

(c) There is no delay in the implementation of the project.

FDI hike in telecom sector

*259. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to with-hold its decision to hike FDI in telecom to 74 per cent;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the security concern arising from increase in FDI was the main reason?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The